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OF THE

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THE STORY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

CHAPTER I.

GOD MADE THE WORLD.

WHEN God made the world, our earth had no form, and was quite dark. God then said, Let there be light! and the light shone out, and God saw that it was good, and gave it the name of Day. To the dark time when the sun did not shine he gave the name of Night.

God made the sky, and put the sun, and moon, and stars in it to give light to the earth. The sun to shine by day; and the moon and stars to shine at night.

Of the wa-ter that was on earth God made two things—the clouds, which he put in the sky, and the seas which he put on the earth. He made sea birds to skim the waves, and in the seas he put great whales and large and small fish, and all things that could live or swim in the wa-ter.

Where the wa-ter did not flow was called dry land, and he said, This dry land shall bring forth grass and herbs, and trees and fruit, and all sorts of things that grow from seeds, or roots. He made beasts and birds to live on the land; and soon the earth was full of things that could creep and crawl, could walk and run, could swim and fly, could eat and drink, in short, things that had life.

Then God said, Let us make man in our own image, and let him rule over the fish of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts and the whole earth.

All these things God made in six days. On the first day he made the light and the dark, or as we call it, Day and Night. The air and

clouds and sky he made on the next day. The dry land and the seas, the grass, herbs, trees, and fruits he made on the third day. On the fourth day he made the sun and the moon and the stars, and put them in their places in the sky. The fifth day he made the fish of the sea, and the fowl of the air; and on the sixth day he made the beasts, and last of all, he made man. When God looked at all these things he had made, he saw that they were good, so on the seventh day he rested from all work, and made that day ho-ly.

Let us count the things God made: Light, Air, Clouds, Sky, Sea, Dry Land, Things that Grow out of the Earth, Sun, Moon and Stars, Beasts, Birds, and last of all MAN.

Then God made a gar-den, in E-den, and there he put the man whom he had made, and brought the beasts and birds to him; and Ad-am gave them their names. In the gar-den, fine fruits and great trees grew, and a large stream flowed through it to keep the ground moist, so that the plants might grow. God told Ad-am (The Man) to take good care of it, and that he might eat of the fruit of all the trees but one—the tree of Knowl-edge of Good and E-vil—and of this God said, you must not eat of it, or touch it, else you will die.

Next God said it was not good for man to be alone; so a deep sleep fell on Ad-am, and while he slept God took a rib from his side, and of this rib he made Eve, and gave her to the man to be his wife, and a help meet for him.

In the Gar-den of E-den came the Dev-il in the form of a Ser-pent that was full of guile. It came to Eve, and said, Did God say you should not eat of all the trees here? And she said, we may eat of all the trees save one, and if we eat of that one, we shall die.

That is not true, said the snake, it will not harm you to taste it. You will not die; that fruit will make you as wise as God is. Eve looked at the fruit, and thought it seemed nice, and she wanted to be wise, so she picked some and ate and gave some to Ad-am, and he too ate of it. Then they were in great dread and tried to hide from God when they heard his voice.

God called Ad-am and asked if he ate the fruit he told him not to eat. Ad-am said he did; but his wife was to blame, for she gave it to him; and Eve said the snake was to blame, for he urged her to eat of it.

Then God said, As the snake has done this he shall crawl on the ground and eat dust all the days of his life.

THE BEASTS OF THE FIELD AND WOODS.

God was wroth with Ad-am and Eve and drove them out of the Gar-den. An an-gel stood at the gate with a sword, and would not let them come back. God cursed the ground for their sake; and told them they would have to work hard for their bread, and when they died their bodies should go back to dust. But he said, He would send the Son of Man, who was at the same time the Son of God, the Sa-viour, to save Ad-am and Eve, and all men, from the guilt of their sin, so that when the body died and went back to dust whence it came, the soul should not die, but should go back to live with God who gave it.

Then God made coats of skin for Ad-am and Eve, and drove them out of E-den; but he gave them two sons, Cain and A-bel. Cain's work was to till the fields, to dig the ground, plant trees, and reap the corn and fruit. A-bel's work was to tend the herds and flocks. A-bel was good. Cain was not good, so when they both brought a gift to the Lord, God took A-bel's gift but would not take Cain's. This made Cain angry, so one day he slew A-bel, and when God said, Where is A-bel? he said, I know not. This shows how sin leads to sin. Cain slew A-bel and then told a lie to hide the first sin. But God, who can read all

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FLEE-ING TO A CITY OF REF-UGE.

hearts, knew what Cain had done, and said, A-bel's blood cries to me from the ground, this land shall give you no more corn when you till it. You shall be a fu-gi-tive and wan-der-er on the earth. He was too bad to live with his friends. God put a mark on him that all men might know him, and drove him off to live like a tramp. So Ad-am and Eve lost both their sons in one day; for Cain went a great way off and A-bel was slain.

Cain went from place to place till he came to the land of Nod; there he took a wife and had a son named E-noch, and built a town which he named for his son. E-noch's sons had sons, too; one was named Ja-bal, one Ju-bal, and one Tu-bal-cain. Ja-bal taught men to live in tents and tend flocks, Ju-bal taught them to play and sing, and Tu-bal-cain taught them to make fine things of brass and iron.

Then God gave Eve a son called Seth, to take the place of A-bel whom Cain slew; he gave Ad-am and Eve more boys and girls, too, and when these boys and girls were grown they had sons of their own, some of whom were bad and some good. One of them, named E-noch, was so good that God did not let him die, but took him up to live with him.

GOD FAV-ORS A-BEL'S SAC-RI-FICE.

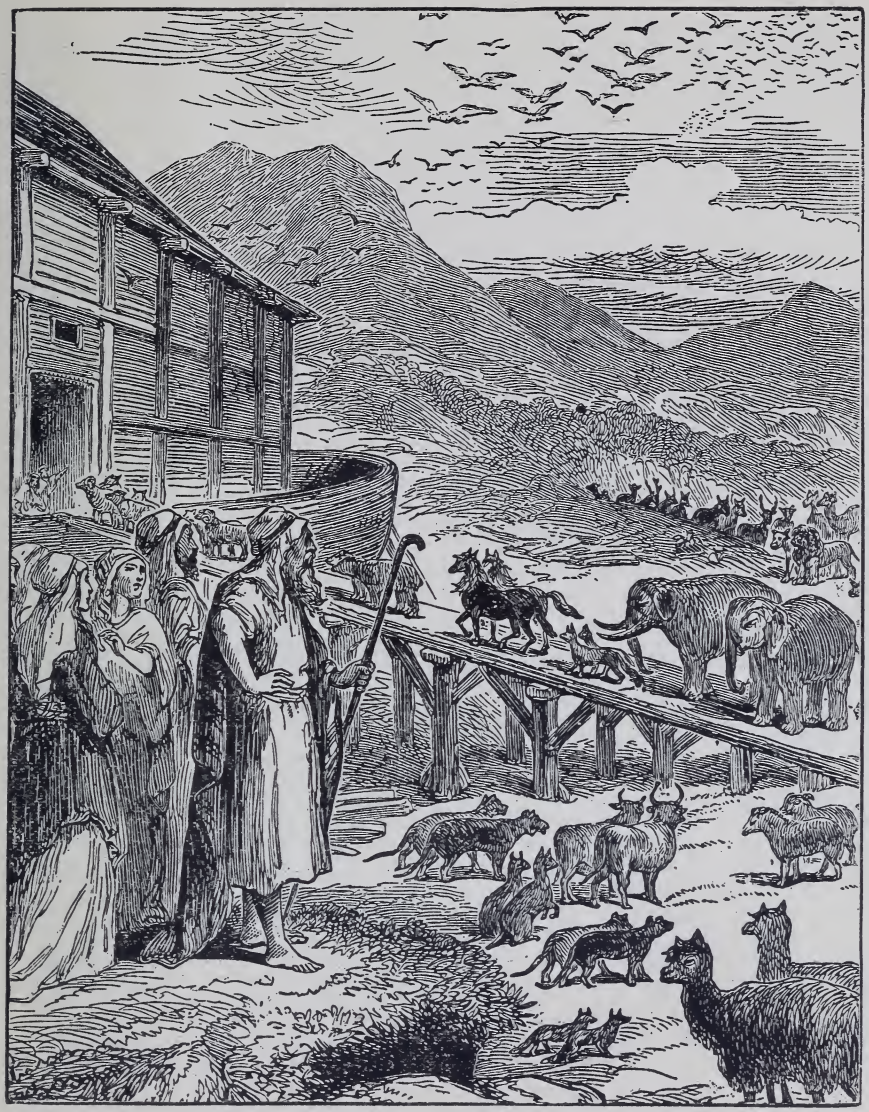
As the years went by there were more and more folks who did not love the Lord nor try to please him, so he said he would send a great flood and sweep them from the face of the earth.

CHAPTER II.

THE FLOOD.

THERE was one man, No-ah, who was so good and just that God said he would save him and his wife and his three sons and their wives; so he told No-ah how to make an Ark that would float like a boat and be a good house for them when the flood came. It took No-ah near five score years to build the Ark, but he had faith and kept at work, though folks laughed at him and would not heed his words when he told them what the Lord meant to do to them for their sins.

At last the Ark was done and God bade No-ah go in and take all his folks and some of all the beasts and birds with him. Then the flood came, the rain fell for for-ty days and for-ty nights. The wa-ter rose and floated the Ark; and though the folks went up to the tops of the hills they were not safe. All things that lived, men and wom-en, boys and girls, beasts and birds,



NO-AH'S ARK.

were drowned; none were left but No-ah and those with him in the Ark. Then God sent a wind that dried up the sea.

At last when No-ah could see the tops of the hills, he sent out a crow, which flew off and did not come back to the Ark. Then he sent out a dove, but as she could find no place to rest on she came back to the Ark, and No-ah kept her a week, and then sent her out once more. This time the dove saw some trees; yet the dove did not stay, but plucked off a leaf with its beak, and came back to No-ah, who then knew the sea had gone down so much that the tops of the trees could be seen. He kept the dove for a week, and then sent her out for the third time. As she did not come back he knew the ground was dry; so he and his folks, and all the beasts and birds left the Ark; and to show his thanks to God, No-ah made an al-tar of stones, and burned beasts and birds on it, as that was then the way men used to thank the Lord. Then God told No-ah he would send no more floods. While the earth lasts there shall be seed time and harvest time, and cold and heat, and win-ter and sum-mer, and day and night. As a sign of this he put his bow in the clouds, and at times, when the rain falls, we still see this bow in the sky.

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AF-TER THE FLOOD.

No-ah lived to a good old age, and when he had been dead some time the world was once more full of folks, who had grown as bad as those the flood drowned. In the old times folks spoke the same speech, and lived as one peo-ple. They said, Let us build a tow-er of brick whose top may reach the sky, and be a land mark for us, lest we be spread over the face of the whole earth.

God saw the work and the wicked thoughts in their hearts, and was wroth with them. He made them all speak in a strange way; this tribe could not tell what that tribe said; and this man could not tell that man what to do; so at last they had to stop work. There was so much noise, that the pile they started to build was called the Tow-er of Ba-bel.

Now a son of one of the sons of Shem, a son of No-ah, dwelt in the land of Ur. His name was A-bram and he was a good man and tried to serve the Lord, but the men of that land did not serve the true God. They bowed down to false gods and were so bad that God said to A-bram: Leave this place, and your home, and your friends and go to the place to which I shall show you the way. And I will make you the head of great na-tion, and I will bless you and bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you; and the

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A-BRAM AND THE AN-GELS.

best that a man can wish for his friend will be that he may be as well off as A-bram.

So A-bram took his wife Sa-ra-i and Lot, his brother's son and went to the land of Shech-em. A-bram and Lot were both rich men and as there was not room in that place for all their flocks and herds A-bram said it would be best for them to part; so he told Lot to choose which way he would go, and Lot chose the rich plain of Sod-om where there was much grass for his sheep to eat, and wells and springs from which they might drink.

When Lot had gone God came to A-bram in a dream and told him he should have a son in his old age and that his heirs should be as many as the stars in the sky, and should own all that land. One day as A-bram sat at the door of his tent he saw three men near him and he asked them to rest in the shade of a tree while he brought them food and drink. Then the men (it is said that two of them were an-gels and one was the Lord in the form of a man), went on to Sod-om, the town in which Lot dwelt. A-bram went with them part of the way and they told him the Lord meant to burn up the bad towns of Sod-om and Go-mor-rah. This made A-bram so sad he left them and went back, but the an-gels kept on

to Sod-om where they found Lot, and told him to take those who were dear to him and flee in great haste out of the doomed town and not to look back. Lot's wife did look back and for this sin she changed from life to death and was turned to a pil-lar of salt. Lot and his two girls kept straight on till they came to Zo-ar, and then the Lord sent fire to burn the two wicked towns and all that was in them.

When A-bram was an old man God gave him a son, which made them so glad that they laughed for joy and called the child I-saac (which means laugh-ter). When it was time to wean the babe A-bram made a feast and Ha-gar a slave of Sa-rah's who had served as wife, and her son Ish-ma-el were there. Ish-ma-el made fun of I-saac, so A-bram put him and Hag-ar out of the tent and would not let them come back. But God took care of them and Ish-ma-el grew up to be the head of a great tribe.

I-saac, too, grew to be a young man and all went well with him till one day God, to try A-bram's faith, told him to take his dear son to the land of Mo-ri-ah and burn him there on a heap of wood and stone, just as A-bel and No-ah had burnt lambs to show their love to God. A-bram did not know why the Lord told him to do this

hard thing but he thought it was right to do what God bade him, so he took I-saac to the place of which God had told him and there he made a mound on which he laid his son, and then took the knife to slay him. But just as he raised his hand to strike, the Lord called to him and said, Do not harm the lad; since you love and fear me so much that you would give me your own dear son, I will not take him from you, but I will bless you in all things, and from your seed shall spring the One who is to save the world. Then A-bram saw a ram caught in a bush, so he burnt it on the mound and then went home with his son.

CHAPTER III.

I-SAAC AND RE-BEK-AH.

NOW when Sa-ra-i was dead A-bram thought it was time for I-saac to have a wife, but as all the maids of that land served false gods he did not wish him to wed one of them. So he told the head man of his house to go to his old home and bring a good girl from there to be I-saac's wife. This man was good and true and wished to do what was right, so when he came to a place

where there was a well he stopped at the gate of the town and begged God to help him make a wise choice; he said when the girls of the town came to the well he would ask one of them for a drink, and if she let him and his beasts quench their thirst he would know she was the one God meant for him to choose. Just as he spake these words a young maid came to the well and when he said, Let me drink, I pray thee; she gave him as much as he could drink and then filled the trough for his beasts. Then he knew she was the maid that God chose, so he gave her gifts of gold, and asked her whose child she was. When he found her folks were kin to A-bram he went home with her and told them A-bram was rich and good and had sent him there to find a wife for his son. They said Re-bek-ah (that was the girl's name) might wed I-saac if she chose, so she went back with the man and I-saac made her his wife, and loved her very much. Two sons were born to I-saac and Re-bek-ah; they were twins. The name of the first born was E-sau, and the name of the one who was born last was Ja-cob. When the boys grew up E-sau used to stay in the fields and hunt, but Ja-cob was a plain man, who watched the sheep and lived in a tent. I-saac loved E-sau and liked to eat the game he

killed, but Re-bek-ah loved Ja-cob. One day Ja-cob made some broth, and when E-sau came from the field, faint for lack of food, and saw this good broth he begged for some of it. But Ja-cob said, You were born first so you have a right to the lands and goods of our sire and to rule the house when he dies—now, if you will sell me this right you may have my broth. And E-sau said, I am at the point of death and this right will do me no good; so he sold it to Ja-cob which was a great sin.

When I-saac grew so old he could not see, he said to E-sau: My son, go out and kill a deer and cook it the way I like, and bring it to me that I may eat it and bless thee ere I die. Re-bek-ah heard him say this, and, as she loved Ja-cob more than she did E-sau, she took two young kids and made a stew such as I-saac liked; then she put some of E-sau's clothes on Ja-cob, and as hair grew on E-sau's hands she put the skins of the kids on Ja-cob's hands to make them feel like the hands of E-sau. Then Ja-cob took the dish to I-saac and asked him to bless him. When I-saac smelt the meat and felt the hands he thought Ja-cob was E-sau, so he blessed him and prayed God to give him all the good things of the earth. As soon as Ja-cob had left the room E-sau came

in with the deer he had cooked, and when he found what Ja-cob had done, he cried with a loud voice, I am E-sau, your first-born son. I have done what you told me. Rise now, sit and eat my game, that you may bless me. And I-saac blessed him, but not with the same great blessing as Ja-cob.

E-sau was so wroth with Ja-cob that he said he would kill him. When Re-bek-ah heard this she told Ja-cob he must flee at once, and she asked I-saac to let him go to her old home. I-saac said he might go there and get a wife, so Ja-cob set out on his way to Ha-ran. When it grew dark he lay down, put his head on a stone, and went to sleep. Then he had a dream, in which he saw some steps that reached from the earth to the sky. An-gels went up and down the steps and the Lord stood at the top and told Ja-cob he would give all that land to him and his seed. As soon as Ja-cob woke he rose up, poured oil on the stone on which his head had laid, and said, The Lord is in this place and it shall be called Beth-el, which means the house of God. And he vowed that if God would be with him and keep him, the Lord should be his God. Then he went on, and when he was near Ha-ran he stopped at a well in a field, where

he met Ra-chel, a sweet young girl, who went to the well with her flock twice a day. He told her he was Re-bek-ah's son, and she told him she was La-ban's girl, so they found they were kin, and he went home with her and lived with La-ban a long time, for he was in love with Ra-chel and told La-ban he would work for him sev-en years if he would give him Ra-chel to be his wife. La-ban said he would do this, but he did not keep his word, for at the end of the sev-en years he told Ja-cob he must take Le-ah for his wife, as she was born first and the rule of that land was that the girl who was born first must wed first. Ja-cob did not love Le-ah, but he had to make her his wife and then work just as long more for Ra-chel, whom he loved with all his heart. (In those days and in that land men might have more than one wife at a time, but in these days and in this land they may have but one.)

Ja-cob had a hard life with La-ban, who was not kind to him, so he made up his mind to go back to the land of Ca-naan, with his wives and his flocks and herds. He sent some of his men on in front with gifts for E-sau, for, though it had been a long time since he fled from him, he still felt a fear that E-sau might wish to kill him, so

JA-COB'S DREAM.

he tried to gain his good will with gifts. But he had naught to fear, for time had made such a change in both men that when at last they met they were good friends once more.

The trip from Ha-ran back to Ja-cob's old home was a long one, and on the way Ra-chel fell sick and died, which was a great grief to Ja-cob. He was now an old man and had twelve sons. Jo-seph was the best one, and Ja-cob loved him most and gave him a fine coat, which made the rest hate him and want to get rid of him. At this time Jo-seph had two strange dreams—in the first one he thought he and his broth-ers were at work in the field and that as they bound sheaves his sheaf stood up straight while the sheaves of his broth-ers bowed down to it. In the next dream he thought the sun, moon, and stars bowed down to him; now his broth-ers thought these dreams meant that they should bow down to Jo-seph, so they were full of spite and they hated him more than they had done be-fore.

There was much grass in the vale of Shech-em and so Ja-cob sent his sons there to feed their flocks, and one day he bade Jo-seph go and see if all was well with them. When these bad men saw him draw near they made a plot to get

rid of him. They sold him to a band of men who were on their way to E-gypt; then they took his fine coat, dipped it in the blood of a kid, and then took it home and showed it to Ja-cob to make him think a wild beast had killed Jo-seph. This was a hard blow to the poor old man, and he rent his clothes and wept for his son.

The men who bought Jo-seph sold him as a slave to Pot-i-phar, one of the chief men of the king of E-gypt. When Pot-i-phar, who was a rich man, found how good and true Jo-seph was he put his house and lands and all his goods in his care. But Pot-i-phar's wife was false and mean, and she said what was not true, and led Pot-i-phar to think Jo-seph was a bad man, so he shut him up in jail and kept him there a long time.

Two of the head men of the king of E-gypt were in the same jail, and they each had a dream, and Jo-seph told them what the dream meant: he said that in three days one man would be set free and one would be put to death. What he said came to pass, for on the third day from that time one man was put to death, and one was set free and went back to serve the king once more.

A year or two went by and then Pha-ra-oh the king had two strange dreams in one night:

he thought he stood on the bank of the Nile and saw sev-en fat cows come out of the stream and feed in a field near by, and sev-en lean cows come up and eat the fat ones. Then Pha-ra-oh woke but soon went to sleep once more and had the same dream in a new form. This time he saw sev-en good and full ears of corn on one stalk and sev-en poor thin ears sprang up and ate the good ones. He sent for all the wise men in the land to come and tell him what this queer dream meant, but they could not tell. Then the king was sad and did not know what to do, till the man who had been in jail said that Jo-seph had once told him and his friend what their dreams meant, and that what he said came out true. Then Pha-ra-oh sent for Jo-seph, who, when he heard the dreams, said God would help him make them clear. Then he told the king that the two dreams were just two forms of one dream and that both were a sign of the same thing. The sev-en fat cows and sev-en good ears of corn meant sev-en years of great good times, and the sev-en lean cows and sev-en poor ears of corn meant sev-en years of bad times. He said that for sev-en years the crops would be large, and there would be much more corn than the folks could eat; and then would come sev-en years in which

JO-SEPH TELLS PHA-RA-OH WHAT HIS DREAM MEANT.

the crops would fail, and the great dearth of those years would eat up the crops of the good years like the lean cows ate the fat ones.

Then Jo-seph told the king it would be well to choose a wise man to take charge of things and save a great deal of food while there was so much of it, so that no one should starve while the dearth was in the land. The king thought this was a good plan, and he said Jo-seph was the best man he knew to fill the place, for the Lord was with him and there was no one so wise as he. So he chose him to be his right hand man, and gave him a ring and a gold chain and fine clothes and a grand coach to ride in, and said all men should bow down to him, and he should be the lord of the land and rank next to the king. He gave him a wife, too, and Joseph had two sons and led a life of peace and joy.

But though he was no slave now, but a rich man, he did not cease to work. He went from place to place and built large barns to hold the crops, for in those days the ears of corn were like the sand of the sea, more than one could count. It was well he laid up so much food, for in sev-en years a great dearth came in all lands, and men came from far and near to buy corn of Jo-seph. It was not long ere his broth-ers (all but Ben-ja-

min) came too, for the dearth was in the land of Ca-naan, and Ja-cob sent them to E-gypt to buy bread. Jo-seph knew them as soon as he saw them, but they did not know him, for he was a mere boy when they sold him, and now he was a man so rich and great that they feared him and bowed low at his feet, which made Jo-seph think of the dream in which he saw their sheaves bow to his sheaf. He felt no ill will to them for what they had done to him; he still loved them and meant to treat them well, but he did not wish them to know him yet, so he spoke in a rough tone, and said they were spies who had come to find out things they ought not to know. They told him they were not spies, but the sons of a good old man named Ja-cob, who had sent them to buy bread. Jo-seph longed to hear some more news from his old home, so he led them on to talk, and they told him they came from Ca-naan and that Ja-cob had twelve sons, but one was dead, and one was at home. Jo-seph said they did not tell the truth, and that they should go to jail and stay there till they could prove they were not spies. He kept them in jail three days and then said nine of them might go back to Ca-naan and bring Ben-ja-min to prove that they spoke the truth, and he said he would keep

one of them in jail till they came back with Ben-ja-min. Then he filled their bags with corn, put back the coin in each man's sack and sent them off.

Ja-cob's heart was full of pain when he heard their tale, and at first he would not let Ben-ja-min leave him, but at last, when the corn they had brought from E-gypt was all gone, he had to let him go, for he knew they would all starve if he did not, since Jo-seph had said they should have no more food till he saw the lad. When Jo-seph saw him he said, God be good to thee, my son, and then went to his room and wept for joy. He did not tell his broth-ers who he was, but he took Sim-e-on out of jail and made a feast for them all, and then filled their sacks with corn and sent them off once more. But as he wished to test them he bade his head man hide a fine cup in Ben-ja-min's sack, and then go to the men and say, why were ye so mean as to steal my lord's cup? He did this to see if they would stand by the boy and be good to him, or would go off and leave him to his fate. The head man did as Jo-seph bade him, and as the men did not know the cup was in Ben-ja-min's bag they said they had not seen it. Then they told the man to search, and if he found the

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I AM JO-SEPH WHOM YE SOLD.

cup with them they would be the slaves of Jo-seph, and he might kill the one in whose sack he found it. Great was their woe when it was found in Ben-ja-min's bag, but they went back, fell at Jo-seph's feet and said they had come to be his slaves. But he said none but the one who stole the cup should serve him, and all but Ben-ja-min should go home. Then one of them said Ja-cob would die of grief if they went home and the lad was not with them, and he begged Jo-seph to keep him for a slave and let Ben-ja-min go.

When Jo-seph heard these words he could not keep back his tears. He fell on Ben-ja-min's neck and wept and said to his broth-ers ; I am Jo-seph whom ye sold. Ye thought to do me harm but God meant it for good and brought me to this land that I might save your lives. Do not grieve for what ye did to me, but go home and tell our sire I am the lord of all E-gypt, and if he will come here I will take good care of him, and all of you, and he shall end his days in peace.

So Ja-cob and his sons and all their flocks and herds went down to E-gypt, and Pha-ra-oh was good to them, for Jo-seph's sake, and gave them the land of Go-shen where there was grass for

their flocks; and he fed them with bread all the years of the fam-ine. Ja-cob died in the land of Go-shen, and in the course of time Jo-seph died too, as did the good, kind king who had been his friend and made him lord of E-gypt.

CHAPTER IV.

THE IS-RA-EL-ITES, OR SONS OF JA-COB.

THE Is-ra-el-ites (that was the name of the race that was born to Ja-cob) led a life of ease in the land of Go-shen as long as Jo-seph lived, but when he was dead hard times came to them, for the new king had not known Jo-seph and all he did for E-gypt, and he felt a fear that this strange tribe might grow too large and strong for him to rule them. So, to keep them down, he made them work hard and do tasks that they were not used to do, and he set men to watch them at work and beat them if they did not do all the tasks they were told do. But as they still grew more and more, in spite of the hard work laid on them, the new king said all the boys should be put to death as soon as they were born, lest when they grew to be men they should join his foes and make war on him.

One boy born at this time was hid in a small boat made of grass and reeds and daubed with pitch so that it might not sink; and the boat was laid in the weeds that grew by the side of the Nile. This was the stream in which the king's daugh-ter used to bathe, and one day she saw the boat and sent her maid to fetch it and took the babe to be as her own child, and called him Moses (which means drawn out) to show that he had been drawn out of the Nile. Wise men were hired to teach him. He knew the names of the stars; the names of beasts, and birds and plants. And though brought up at the court of the king he ceased not to love the folks of his own kin.

Things grew worse with the men of Is-ra-el all the time, and when Mo-ses grew up he tried to help them. One day when he saw a man of E-gypt beat an Is-ra-el-ite he slew the man and hid the corpse in the sand. But some one saw him and told the king, so Mo-ses had to flee for his life. He went to the land of Mid-i-an and took a wife and lived there a long time, and led his sheep to eat grass on the green hills. One day when he was with his flock on Mount Ho-reb he saw a bush on fire, but, though the flame was fierce, the bush was not burnt up. While Mo-

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THE KING'S DAUGH-TER FINDS MO-SES.

ses looked at this strange sight the Lord spoke to him from the midst of the bush, and said He had heard the cry of the Is-ra-el-ites, and Mo-ses must go and beg Pha-ra-oh to let them leave E-gypt. Mo-ses said he was not fit to do this great work for he was slow of speech and could not talk well. Then God said Aa-ron, who was quick and fluent of speech, should go with him and say what he told him to, and that with the rod he held in his hand he should do signs, to touch the heart of Pha-ra-oh and make him fear the Lord.

So Mo-ses set out for E-gypt and on the way he met Aa-ron his broth-er and told him what the Lord had said they were to do. Then they both went and spoke to Pha-ra-oh; Thus saith the Lord, let Is-ra-el go, that they may serve me. But Pha-ra-oh said: I know not the Lord, nor will I let Is-ra-el go. They do not like to work, and so they wish to leave my land and go where they can take more ease. If they had more work to do they would have less time to think of such things. So he set the poor Is-ra-el-ites more hard tasks and beat them more than he had yet done, till they came to Mo-ses, with sighs and tears, and said they could not bear such a life.

Then Mo-ses cried to the Lord for them, and

God sent ten plagues to touch the king's hard heart. Each time he sent a new plague he would say, Let Is-ra-el go, that they may serve me, and the king would say, Make the plague cease and then they may go. But he did not keep his word and at last God sent the tenth plague, which was the worst of all, for it was Death. In all the homes of E-gypt he slew the son who was born first, and the king's son, and the rich man's son, and the poor man's son, all died the same night, as well as the first born of all the beasts. Death did not touch the Is-ra-el-ites and there was no dead child in their homes, but in each house where the E-gyp-tians dwelt there was a dead child that night.

The Is-ra-el-ites killed a lamb, and roasted, and ate it. They put some of the blood of the lamb at the top and sides of their doors as a sign that God would not kill their first born. This feast is called the Passover because God has passed over the Jews.

This was too much for the hard-hearted king. He felt such fear that he wished to get rid at once of the Is-ra-el-ites. So he told Mo-ses, Go and take the chil-dren of Is-ra-el with you; they may take their sheep and cows with them, and all that they have.

CHAPTER V.

MO-SES AND THE RED SEA.

MO-SES did not wait for the king to change his word, and the Is-ra-el-ites were quick to leave the land in which they had been slaves; but when they were gone Pha-ra-oh wished he had not let them go, so he took a large host of armed men and went out to bring them back. By this time they were at the Red Sea, and when they saw Pha-ra-oh's host draw near they were in sad straits, for they did not know how to go on nor how to get out of the way. But God bade Mo-ses stretch out his rod and when he had done this the Lord sent a strong wind and blew back the sea till it stood up in two high walls and left a dry path for Is-ra-el to cross on. Then the E-gyp-tians tried to cross the same way, but as soon as the Is-ra-el-ites were safe on shore Mo-ses raised the rod once more and the sea went back to its bed and drowned Pha-ra-oh and all his host, and they lay like stones down in the sea.

When Is-ra-el left the Red Sea they had to march three days with nought to drink, and when at last they came to a stream it was so bad they

THEY CROSS THE RED SEA.

could not drink of it and were like to die of thirst. Then Mo-ses cried to the Lord for help and God showed him a tree and bade him throw it in the stream to make it sweet. They all drank as much as they chose and then went on their way; but when the food they brought from E-gypt was all gone they told Mo-ses he might as well have left them where they were as to bring them here to die for lack of bread. Then God said he would rain down bread for them, and soon the ground was full of a small white thing like frost: it was sweet, and round in shape, but they did not know what it was, so they called it man-na—which means What is this?

Mo-ses told them it was bread God sent from the sky, and he said each day they should pick up as much as they would need for that day, and on the sixth day they must pick up what they would need for two days, as no bread would be sent on the sev-enth day which was to be for them a day of rest.

From this time on, for the two score years that the Is-ra-el-ites were on the way to Ca-naan, there was no lack of food; but at times there was lack of drink, and once—at a place called Reph-id-im—their thirst was so great that Mo-ses feared they would kill him in their rage. But the

THE TEN LAWS OF GOD.

Lord came to his aid and bade him go to Ho-reb, which was near, and smite a rock there with his rod. A large stream gushed out of the rock when Mo-ses smote it, and they drank their fill, and had strength to march to Si-na-i, where they pitched their camp.

The Lord came down in smoke and fire, and stood on Mount Si-na-i and spoke to Is-ra-el from the midst of a thick cloud. He called Mo-ses to the top of the mount and spoke with him face to face, and gave him two blocks of stone on which were ten laws which he said Is-ra-el must not fail to keep. Mo-ses was on the Mount so long that the folks thought he would not come back to them, and they begged Aa-ron to make a god to show them the way to the land of Ca-naan. Aa-ron bade them give him their gold, and when he threw it in the fire it took the form of a gold calf, and they bowed down to it and said it was the God who brought them up out of the land of E-gypt.

When Mo-ses came down from the mount and heard them sing and saw them dance and bow down to this false god, he was so wroth that he threw down the two blocks of stone and broke them. Then he took the calf and burned it with fire and ground it to dust, and, when he

had prayed the Lord not to curse Is-ra-el for this great sin, he took his stand at the door of the camp and said all who were on the Lord's side should join him there. The sons of Le-vi came to him and he bade them take their swords and go through the camp and slay all the men they met.

Then God told Mo-ses to make two more blocks of stone like those he broke, and take them to the top of the mount. The Lord then wrote the ten laws on the new blocks and Mo-ses went down and showed them to the Is-ra-el-ites and told them if they did not keep these laws they should not reach the land they sought. These ten laws we call the Ten Com-mand-ments. When Mo-ses came down from the mount his face shone with such a bright light that Aa-ron and the men dared not speak to him till he had put a veil on his face.

CHAPTER VI.

THE YEARS OF WAN-DER-ING.

AT this time the chil-dren of Is-ra-el lived in tribes, and the men had to fight the foes they met on their way to Ca-naan. But the men

of the tribe of Le-vi did not fight—their work was to take care of the tent (that was their church), and of all the things in it.

Near this tent God put a thing that was like a cloud by day, and a bright light, like fire, by night. This cloud, or light, was a sign that the Lord was with them, and it led them on from place to place. When it went in front of them they went straight on and when it stood still they stopped in that place as long as it stayed there.

Now, when they had been a year or more at Si-na-i the cloud moved and they knew it was time for them to go on their way to the land of Ca-naan. So the priests blew the horns, the men of Le-vi took up the tent and the tribes moved on. But soon they grew tired and spoke to Mo-ses in a cross way: they said they would like to be back in E-gypt, for there they had fish and fruit to eat, and here they had naught but bread, of which they were tired and they longed for some flesh meat. Then Mo-ses begged the Lord to help him and there went forth a wind which brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp. And they stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and picked up the quails—but the Lord was wroth with them, and smote the folks with a great plague. So that

place was called by a long name that means the graves of lust, and then the tribes went on to Ha-zer-oth.

Here Mir-i-am and Aa-ron did a great wrong to Mo-ses. They spoke harsh things of him because he took for a wife a maid who did not come from the tribes of Is-ra-el and God was wroth with them and told them that Mo-ses was more wise and good and meek than they, and that it was a sin for them to say or do what would hurt him. For this sin Mir-i-am was made sick and shut out of the camp for a week; but when Moses prayed for her God healed her and let her come back to the camp, and all the tribes went on once more.

When they came near the land of Ca-naan Mo-ses told them to go up and take it as God had said they should, but they feared to do this and said they would like first to send men to spy out the land and tell them what was in it and what sort of peo-ple dwelt there. So Mo-ses chose one man from each tribe—and told them to go and see if the men of the place were large or small, strong or weak, and—that he might judge of the soil—he told them to bring back some of the fruit that grew in the land. The spies were gone five or six weeks. When they came back

they brought some figs and a bunch of grapes so large that they had to bring it in on a staff borne by two men. They said the land bore fine fruit but the men were large and fierce, and the towns were shut in by strong high walls.

All the spies but Ca-leb and Josh-u-a said such sad things of the land of Ca-naan that the Is-ra-el-ites were scared and would not try to take it, as God had bid them, though Ca-leb and Josh-u-a urged them, and told them the Lord would fight for them and they had naught to fear. God was wroth with them for their want of faith in him and said none but Ca-leb and Josh-u-a should see the fair land. Since they would not go in when he told them to, they should not go at all.

Mo-ses was to lead the peo-ple back to the dry lands by way of the Red Sea and they were to stay there for two score years. Some of them thought they still might go up to the good land and though Mo-ses had warned them that God would not be with them, they started off without the Ark or Mo-ses to guide them and were met by the men of Ca-naan and killed.

Now, though God chose Mo-ses to lead the child-ren of Is-ra-el, and chose Aa-ron to be their chief priest, there were three bad men—

Ko-rah, Da-tham, and A-bi-ram—who did not like God's choice. They took the chief men of the tribes with them and went to Mo-ses and Aa-ron and said: We are as good as you are and have as much right to make laws as you have, so you must not think you can rule us. When Mo-ses heard this he fell on his face and told Ko-rah if he and his friends would come to the tent next day and bring fire and gums and sweet things to burn, the Lord would show whom he chose. They did as Mo-ses bade them and when the chiefs put fire on the gums and sweet things they had brought, there came a fire from the Lord and burnt them all to death. Then the ground clave in two, and the earth swallowed them up; Ko-rah, Da-tham and A-bi-ram, and all that were with them. Thus all these bad men died for their sin, and the folks fled from that place lest they too should die a strange death.

But the next day they said that Mo-ses and Aa-ron were to blame for the death of those men; and for this God sent a plague on them. But Aa-ron prayed him to stay the plague, and he did it, so that not all the folks died.

Now, God thought it would be a good plan to give Is-ra-el a proof to show them whom he chose to be his high priest, so he told Mo-ses to

have the chief man of each tribe bring a rod with his name on it. All the rods were put in the tent, near the ark, and the next day, when Mo-ses brought them out it was found that Aa-ron's rod had bulbs on it, which was a sign that Aa-ron was the man that God chose. Then all the men but Aa-ron took back their rods, and God said Aa-ron's rod should stay in the tent for all time as a proof of his right to be high priest.

A long time went by, and when we next get a glimpse of the chil-dren of Is-ra-el they had been in the wild tract and vast sand plains near two score years. We do not know what they did all these years, but God took care of them and gave them clothes and food and drink as they went from place to place. At last they came back to Ka-desh, and there Mir-i-am died; and there the tribes once more found fault with Mo-ses and said he ought not to have brought them from E-gypt to this poor place where there were no figs nor grapes, and where, though they had great thirst, there was no spring nor stream of which they might drink.

Then Mo-ses and Aa-ron went to the tent to ask help of the Lord, and he bade Mo-ses take the rod (Aa-ron's rod that was kept in the tent) and call the folks to him and speak to the rock

in their sight so that a stream might come out of it and the men and beasts might drink of it.

Now Mo-ses was so wroth with the men that he spake harsh words to them and smote the rock twice, which was not what God bade him to do. He was told to speak to the rock but he was mad and struck it twice with the rod. A stream came from it and the men and beasts had as much as they could drink, but the Lord was not pleased with Mo-ses and Aa-ron and said since they had not done just what he told them to do they should not lead the people to the Land of Promise.

When they came to Mount Hor, God said Aa-ron must die there, and he bade Mo-ses and Aa-ron and his son, Ele-a-zar go up to the top of the mount, so that Aa-ron might take a last look at the camp and get a view of the Promised Land ere he died. Then he told Mo-ses to strip Aa-ron of his priest's robe and put it on his son, who was now to be high priest. Aa-ron died on the mount and Mo-ses and Ele-a-zar went back to the camp and told of his death, so the tribes mourned for him a month and then broke camp and went off by the way of the Red Sea.

But the road was rough and the men were sad to think that though they were so near the land

of Ca-naan they might not go in there, but must go back through the dry land des-ert to the Red Sea. Their grief made them speak hard words of God and of Mo-ses; they said, there is no way to quench our thirst here, and we have no good food, and we loathe this light bread.

For this sin the Lord sent snakes to bite them, they begged Mo-ses to pray for them and make their peace with God. Mo-ses did so and God bade him take brass and make a snake like those that bit them and put it up on a pole, and it came to pass that all who were bit, when he looked up to it, he lived. This brass snake was a type of Christ who was to be put on a cross to heal men of their sins.

CHAPTER VII.

DEATH OF MO-SES—JOSH-U-A MADE LEAD-ER.

THE Is-ra-el-ites now marched on to the plains of Mo-ab where they camped. Ba-lak, the king of that land, thought they had come to fight him, and he sent round to Ba-laam that he would give him much gold if he would come to him and curse them, so that they should not win the fight. Ba-laam was a seer—that is, a man

who sees things that are to take place and tells of them ere they come to pass. Now God warned Ba-laam and said, Thou shalt not go with them, thou shalt not curse the peo-ple, for they are blessed.

So Ba-laam told the men of Ba-lak to go back for he could not curse the people. They asked him to come with them, and he did. On the way an an-gel with a drawn sword in his hand stood in the path and the ass that Ba-laam rode saw him and turned to one side to get out of the way. Ba-laam did not see the an-gel, so he smote the ass to make her keep in the right path.

Then the an-gel went on and stood in a place where there was a wall on both sides and when the ass saw him she went close to the wall and hurt Ba-laam's foot, so he struck her once more. Then the an-gel went on and stood in a place where there was no room for her to pass; she fell down with fright, and Ba-laam smote her with a staff.

Then a strange thing took place—God made the dumb beast speak and she said to Ba-laam: Why have you struck me these three times? Have I done aught to harm you, and have I not served you all my life? Then the Lord made Ba-laam see the an-gel and at that sight he fell

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THE SNAKE OF BRASS.

on his face, while the an-gel said: Why didst thou smite the ass? I came out to stop thee and if she had not gone out of the way I would have slain thee. I have said Is-ra-el shall be blest, and thou hast no right to curse them; but go on now and speak the words I shall put in thy mouth.

So Ba-laam went on and when Ba-lak heard that he drew near he went out to meet him and took him to the top of a high hill and showed him the camp of the Is-ra-el-ites, and bade him curse them. Ba-laam wished to please Ba-lak who said he would make him a rich man if he would curse his foes, so he tried to say hard things of them. Three times he tried in vain, each time God made him bless and not curse them, and at last Ba-lak was in such a rage that he sent the seer back home and gave him no gold at all.

The time was now at hand when Mo-ses was to die; he had brought Is-ra-el to the banks of the Jor-dan—and as soon as they crossed that stream they would be in the Land of Ca-naan. But God said Mo-ses should not put his foot on the soil of that good land, though he might feast his eyes on its green grass, clear streams, and rich crops. So he called him to the top of Mount Ne-bo and Mo-ses had a good view of Ca-naan and then

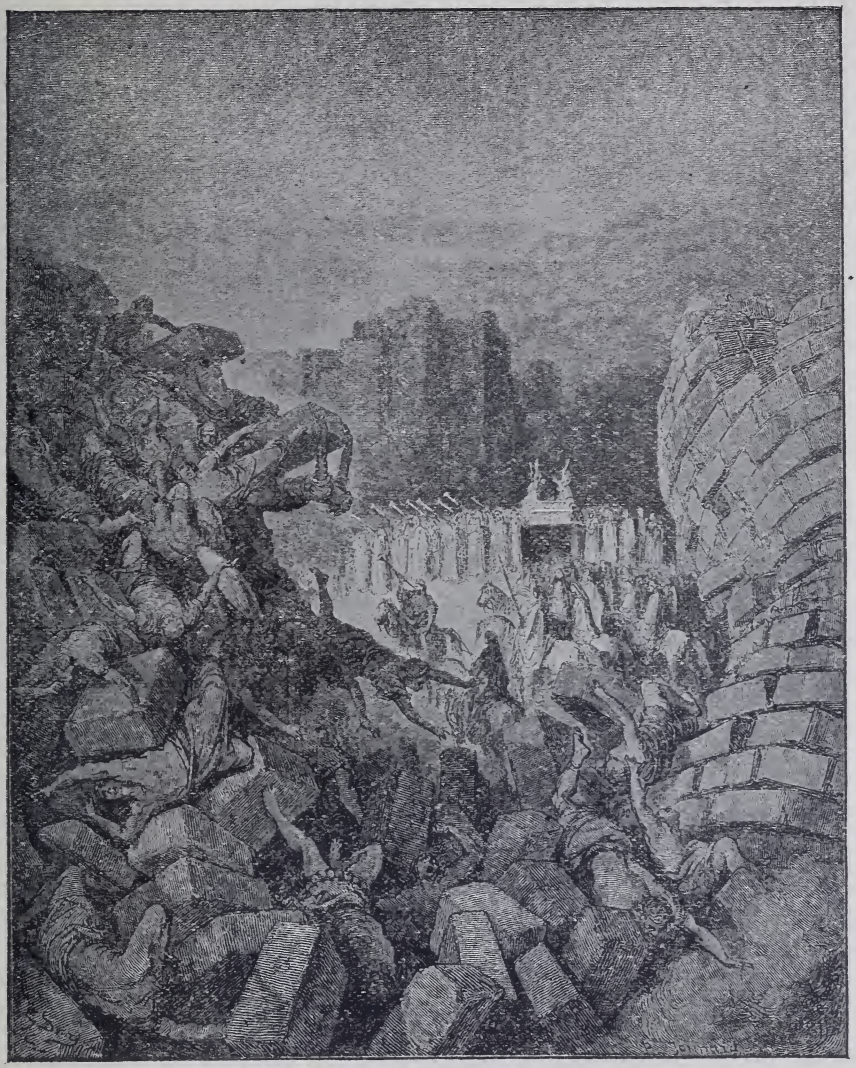
died on the mount. God made his grave and no one knows where it is. But ere he died he had a long talk with his peo-ple and put them in mind of all that the Lord had done for them. He told them they must love and serve God and teach their boys and girls to do the same, and he said if they would keep God's laws the Lord would bless them and bring them safe to Ca-naan. He told them he must soon die, and when he was dead Josh-u-a would take his place and be their chief. Then he went up Mount Ne-bo and they saw him no more, though they wept and mourned for him a month ere they left that spot. Josh-u-a said they must now try to cross the Jor-dan so he led them to the brink of the stream where they stayed three days, and on the fourth day God made the waves roll back and let them cross on dry land just as they had crossed the Red Sea, and when they had all crossed the waters came back.

Though they were now in the land they longed for it was not yet theirs, for it was full of bad men whom God said they must drive out. So they made their camp at a place called Gil-gal, near to the town of Jer-i-cho, and the Lord—in the form of a man—came to Josh-u-a and told him how to take that town. He said the men of

war must march round the walls once each day for six days, and some of the priests must bear the Ark and some must go in front of it and blow rams' horns. The next day they must march round the walls seven times; then the priests must blow a long, loud blast and when the men of war heard this blast they must give a great shout, then the walls of Jer-i-cho would fall down and they might go in and take the town. Josh-u-a and his men did as the Lord bade them, and in a week the town was theirs.

Then they went from place to place and fought their foes on all sides, for Ca-naan was full of men who served false gods and the Lord said Is-ra-el must slay them and drive them out of the land and then live in their homes. Josh-u-a fought for the Lord as long as he could, and put his foes to flight; but at last he grew too old to fight, and when he felt his end was near he called all the tribes of Is-ra-el to him at Shech-em and gave each one a share of the land. He asked them to choose whom they would serve, and said he and his house would serve the Lord who brought them out of E-gypt. All the tribes said they too would serve the Lord who had done such great things for them.

Then Josh-u-a took a large stone and set it



up 'neath a tree and said it should be a sign to them of the vow they made to serve the Lord. Ere long Josh-u-a died and for a while Is-ra-el had peace and rest.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TIME OF THE JUDGES—SAM-SON.

THIS peace did not last long, for they did not do as the Lord bade them. He said they were to slay or drive off all the tribes of Ca-naan, but they did not do this; when they won fights and took towns they let some of their foes stay in the land and made friends of them. The men of Is-ra-el took wives of these tribes who bowed down to false gods, and let their girls wed men who did the same thing, till at last they, too, served these false gods, and for this sin the Lord brought them to grief. He said since they had ceased to live and fear him he would fight for them no more; he let their foes make slaves of them, and for eight years they had to work for the King of Me-so-po-ta-mia. At the end of that time God raised up a man named Oth-niel to take Josh-u-a's place. He freed them from the yoke of this king, and for two score years he

ruled them and was their judge. So long as Oth-niel lived all went well with Is-ra-el, but when he was dead they went back to the same old sin, and once more the Lord gave them up to their foes till they felt grief and shame for what they had done, and begged him to come to their aid. He heard their cry and sent a new judge to help them. But when they were free and at ease once more the same thing came to pass—they ceased to think of God and bowed down to the false gods of the Ca-naan-ites. Each time they sinned the Lord made them feel his wrath and each time they turned from their sin and cried to him with all their heart he sent a new judge to aid them—and thus things went on for years.

At this time there was a man in Is-ra-el named Ma-no-ah, and he and his wife were both good, but they had no child. One day an an-gel came and told them they should have a son who was to work for the Lord and help to free Is-ra-el from her foes. The an-gel said they must not give the child wine to drink, nor must they cut his hair. In due time the babe was born and they named him Sam-son; and he grew and was blessed of the Lord. When Sam-son was of age he took a wife who was not of his own tribe and lived at a place called Tim-nath. Then he

left his wife and went back to his home for a while; and one day when he went to Tim-nath to see her he was told that she was his wife no more but had gone to live with some one else. When Sam-son heard this he was so an-gry that he set fire to some bits of wood which he tied to the tails of fox-es and then set the fox-es loose in the fields to burn up the corn and fruit.

For this the Phil-is-tines burnt his wife and tried to kill him, but he got out of their way and went to live on a rock called E-tam. The men of that place bound him with two new cords to give him up to the Phil-is-tines, but he broke the cords and then took up the jaw bone of an ass he found on the road, and with it he slew a host of his foes, for he had more strength than ten times ten men, and so long as his hair was not cut this strength would not leave him.

The Phil-is-tines told De-li-lah, with whom Sam-son was in love, that they would give her a large sum if she would find out for them the cause of his great strength. Now De-li-lah loved gold more than she loved Sam-son, so she tried her best to make him tell her why he was so strong. She begged and teased him so much that at last he told her his strength lay in his hair, which had not been cut once in all his life,

SAM-SON SLEW A HOST OF HIS FOES.

and he said if his hair was shaved off he would be as weak as most men. When De-li-lah heard this she sent for a man to shave off his hair while he slept, and when his locks were all gone his strength was gone, too. Then the Phil-is-tines put him in jail and put out his eyes and made him grind corn. They thought their god Da-gon helped them to take Sam-son, so they went to the fine house they had built for this god and there gave thanks to him: with hearts full of joy and glee they sent for Sam-son to come and make sport for them, but they did not know that while he was in jail his hair had grown and his strength had come back to him once more.

There was a large crowd in the house, and the roof, too, was full of those who came to mock at the poor blind man. When Sam-son was brought in he said to the lad who led him: Let me feel the posts that I may lean on them. As he took hold of the two chief posts on which the house stood, he prayed to God to give him strength; then he bowed with all his might and the house fell on him and his foes, and killed them all at once; so the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.

Sam-son had been a judge in Is-ra-el for twice ten years ere he died.

CHAPTER IX.

RUTH AND NA-O-MI—SAM-U-EL.

ONCE, while a man whose name we do not know was Judge in Is-ra-el, a great dearth came on the land. At that time an Is-ra-el-ite named E-lim-e-lech lived in the town of Beth-le-hem, and when the dearth was at its height he took his wife, Na-o-mi and his two sons and went to the land of Mo-ab to get food. He died there and his sons were wed in that land; but ere long they too died, and their wives were left with Na-o-mi, who wished to go back to the old home as soon as she heard the dearth had ceased. Ruth and Or-pah, her sons' wives said they would go with her, but she urged them not to. Na-o-mi said, Do you each of you go back to your mother's house, and may God deal as kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead, and with me, and grant that each of you may find a home with a new spouse.

And they wept and said, Nay, we will go back with you to your kin.

At last Or-pah said she would not go; so she kissed Na-o-mi and left her, but Ruth said: Do not ask me to leave thee, for thy home shall

be my home, thy God shall be my God, and naught but Death shall part us. When Na-o-mi saw that Ruth would not stay in Mo-ab she ceased to urge it and took her with her to Beth-le-hem.

They reached there just as the grain was ripe, and when the men went out to reap Ruth said to Na-o-mi: Let me now go to the field and pick up the ears of corn that the men let fall, that we may have food to eat. Na-o-mi bid her do so and it chanced that she went to the field of Bo-az, who, when he saw her said to his head man: Whose girl is this? The man said: She is the girl who came with Na-o-mi from the land of Mo-ab, and she was the wife of Na-o-mi's son.

Now Bo-az was both rich and good, so he told his men to let some of the corn fall that she might pick it up, and he told Ruth she might eat and drink with his maids and said no one should harm her. Then Ruth bowed low and fell on her face and said to Bo-az: Why have I found grace in thine eyes? And he said: I know all that thou hast done—how thou hast left thy home and thy kin for the sake of Na-o-mi, and how thou dost serve the Lord God of Is-ra-el 'neath whose wings thou art come to trust. Then he gave her food to eat and told her to come

each day to glean with his maids and to go to no fields but his.

When Ruth went home that night she gave Na-o-mi the grain she had gleaned and told her how kind Bo-az had been and all that he had said to her. When Na-o-mi heard that Ruth had been in the fields of Bo-az she said: The man is near of kin to us and it is good that thou keep with his maids.

So Ruth went to the fields each day till they were bare and there was no more corn to glean. Then Bo-az made her his wife, and she who had been poor was now rich and great. Ruth's son was named O-bed, and Na-o-mi took care of the child and loved him as much as if he were her own boy. When O-bed grew up he had a son named Jesse, and Jesse's son was the great King David, of whose son the Saviour of the world was born.

While the tent in which the Ark of the Lord was kept was at Shi-loh a man named El-ka-nah used to go from his home in Ra-mah to Shi-loh to pay his vows to the Lord, and each year his wife Han-nah went with him. Han-nah had no child but she had long wished for one, and once when she was in the house of the Lord at Shi-loh she knelt and prayed with all her heart that

God would give her a son. She vowed a vow and said: O Lord of Hosts if thou wilt hear my cry and give me a son he shall serve the Lord all the days of his life. Then E-li, the high priest, said: Go in peace, may the God of Is-ra-el give you what you asked for.

A boy was born to Han-nah, who was called Sam-u-el which means, asked of the Lord, and when she had weaned him she went once more to Shi-loh and took the child with her, to give him to the Lord as she had vowed. She told E-li who she was and said that she wished to leave her son with the high priest that he might be taught to work for the Lord. So E-li kept the child and Han-nah went home, but each year she came to Shi-loh and brought a coat she had made for her boy, for he was still her son though she had lent him to the Lord.

E-li's two sons were priests, too, but they were not good like E-li; they were bad men and brought shame on their sire and on the house of the Lord. E-li was an old man at this time and was not as strict with his sons as he should have been, for, though he heard of all the wrong things they did and knew they were not fit to serve the Lord, he did not drive them out of God's house, but let them stay and be priests.

One day a man of God came to the high priest and told him that since he did not put a stop to the sins of his sons they should both be slain in one day and there should be no more priests of the house of E-li.

All this time Sam-u-el lived with the high priest and was a great help to him, for he was a good boy and grew in grace as he grew in size. One night when he was in bed the Lord called him, and he thought it was E-li's voice he heard so he rose and went to him and said: Here am I, for thou didst call me. E-li said he did not call him and he bade him go back to bed. Soon the voice called him once more, and once more he went to E-li's bed and said: Here am I, for thou didst call me. But the high priest said: I did not call thee, my son, go back and lie down. A third time the voice called Sam-u-el, Sam-u-el, and a third time he went to E-li and said: Here am I, for thou didst call me. Then the high priest saw that the Lord had called the child, so he bade him go back to bed and the next time he heard the voice to say: Speak, Lord, for I hear thee. So when, for the fourth time, the voice called his name he said what E-li bade him, and then the Lord told him that he meant to slay the two sons of E-li;

and to bring pain on the house of the high priest.

The next day E-li made Sam-u-el tell him all that God had said, and when he heard the sad tale he said: It is the Lord, let him do what seems good in his eyes!

It was not long ere these things came to pass, for the next time the Is-ra-el-ites went to fight with the Phil-is-tines some of them were slain and the rest had to flee for their lives. Those who were not killed in the fight went back to camp, and their head men sent to Shi-loh for the Ark of the Lord to go with them to the next fight, for they thought it would save them from their foes. But it was a sin for them to touch the Ark and God had not told them to send for it, so he let the Phil-is-tines take it and slay the two sons of E-li, the priests who had charge of it, as well as a host of the Is-ra-el-ites.

When E-li heard that his sons were dead and the Ark was in the hands of the Phil-is-tines, the news broke his heart and he fell down dead. The Phil-is-tines kept the Ark six or eight months and sent it from town to town, but none went with it and a plague of some sort fell on each place to which it was sent.

At last they thought they would have no

peace so long as they kept the Ark, so they sent it back to the Is-ra-el-ites, and for a long time it was kept in the house of A-bin-a-dab, whose son E-le-a-zar took care of it.

CHAPTER X.

SAUL MADE KING.

WHEN E-li died Sam-u-el was made Judge, and once a year he used to make a trip to all the towns in which he held court, to see that things were as they should be and that all men had their rights. He was a just judge, but his sons whom he chose to help him, when he was too old to do so much work, were not just men; they took bribes. At last the chief men of Is-ra-el came to Sam-u-el and said: Thou art old and thy sons walk not in thy ways, so we want a king to rule and judge us.

These words did not please Sam-u-el and he felt hurt that they should wish to get rid of him; but God said: They have not cast thee off, but they have cast me off—give them the king they ask for, but tell them first what sort of man he will be and how he will treat them.

Then Sam-u-el told all the words of the Lord,

and warned them that they would have a hard time, for their king would tax them and would make slaves of them. Still they said: Nay, but we will have a king to rule us and lead us out to fight, so Sam-u-el said he would choose a king for them, and he bade them go home and wait.

The Lord told Sam-u-el he would send him a man of the tribe of Ben-ja-min, and that he must pour oil on his head and choose him to be the king of Is-ra-el.

Now it came to pass at this time that the mules of Kish, a rich man of the tribe of Ben-ja-min, were lost and he sent his son Saul to look for them. Saul was a young man, tall and strong, with a good form and a fine face. He and his men sought the mules a long time, but could not find them, so they went to Sam-u-el who was a seer to see if he could tell where they were. When Saul drew near the Lord said to Sam-u-el: This is he of whom I spake, the man who shall rule Is-ra-el.

Sam-u-el told Saul the mules were found and had gone home; then he bade him stay all night with him, and next day he went with him as far as the gate of the town and said: Make thy man pass on, but stand thou still that I may show thee the word of the Lord. Then he

poured oil on his head and told him he should be Is-ra-el's king and should save them from the hand of their foes.

Ere long Sam-u-el called all the tribes to Miz-pah and told them that God had made choice of Saul to be their king. When they looked on Saul and saw how tall he was they were so much pleased that they raised a great shout and said: God save the King! Then Sam-u-el made known to them what the Lord would have them and their new king do, and he wrote it in a book. Then he sent all the tribes back to their homes; Saul, too, went to his home in Gi-be-ah, and there went with him a band of men whose hearts God had touched.

Saul gained his first fight and for a while there was peace. Saul next went to war with the Phil-is-tines, and when Is-ra-el saw the great host of their foes, they took fright and would not try to fight them. Some fled, and some hid, and Saul did not know what to do. Sam-u-el told him to go to Gil-gal and wait for him a week, as he would meet him there and show him the will of the Lord.

At the end of a week the seer had not come, so Saul did not wait to learn God's will, but built a mound and burnt a lamb on it, which he knew

he had no right to do. As soon as he had done this Sam-u-el came and said: What hast thou done? Then Saul said: Thou didst not come and I was in a great strait, so I burnt a lamb and made the flame rise up to God as a plea for help. Sam-u-el told him he had sinned and that the Lord was wroth with him and would not let his sons rule, but would choose a man after his own heart.

At this time Saul's son Jon-a-than said to the young man who bore his shield: Let us go to the camp of our foes, for it may be the Lord will work for us. He can save by two as by a host, and in His name we will fight. They went and God made great fear fall on the Phil-is-tines. The earth shook and there was a loud noise, and in their fright they could not tell friends from foes; so they beat down their own men, and Jon-a-than slew a score of them. When Saul and his men heard the noise they too went to the camp of the foe; the men who were hid in caves and rocks came out and joined the fight, and Is-ra-el was saved and their foes were put to flight.

Saul's next fight was with the A-mal-e-kites who were such a bad race that the Lord bade Saul slay them and all that they had, and not to

let a man or beast live. But Saul spared the life of A-gag, the king, and kept the best of the sheep and kine. Then God bade Sam-u-el go to Saul and say: Since thou hast not kept the law of the Lord, thy reign shall be short, and thy crown shall be worn by a man who has a pure heart and is not so proud as thou art. Then Sam-u-el went no more to see Saul, though he mourned for him a long time, for he loved him, in spite of his sin.

At last the Lord said to Sam-u-el: How long wilt thou mourn for Saul? Fill thine horn with oil and go to the house of Jes-se, for one of his sons shall be king. So Sam-u-el went to Beth-le-hem and saw all of Jes-se's sons but Da-vid, a young lad who was in the field with the sheep. The seer told Jes-se to send for him, and when he came the Lord said: This is the one I choose for king, so Sam-u-el poured the horn of oil on his head, and from that day Da-vid felt that the Lord was with him and would keep him in all his ways. But Saul felt that the Lord had left him and at times he could find no peace. Some of his men told him that Da-vid, the son of Jes-se, could play well on the harp and that the sweet sounds might soothe him. Saul sent for Da-vid and the lad stood by him and played the

harp to soothe him when he felt sad and ill at ease.

Once more the Phil-is-tines came out to fight Is-ra-el, and three of Jes-se's sons went with Saul and his men to meet them, but Da-vid went back home and kept the sheep till one day Jes-se bade him go to the camp of Is-ra-el and bring him news of his sons and of the war. Just as Da-vid reached there Go-li-ath came out from the camp of the foe and cried: I dare you to send a man to fight me. Choose your best man and let him come on; if he kills me we will be your slaves, but if I kill him you shall serve us. Go-li-ath was a strong man ten feet tall and he had a brass cap on his head, and wore a coat of mail, and was armed with a spear. Each day for more than a month past he had come out and said the same thing, but none of Saul's men dared go to meet him.

When Da-vid heard these words he spoke to the men near him and made them feel that he would like to fight the man who dared to set at naught all the men of Is-ra-el. What Da-vid said came to Saul's ears, and he sent for the youth and told him he was too young to fight a trained man of war like Go-li-ath: but Da-vid said he had once slain a bear, and that the same God who

saved him from the wild beast, would save him from this proud gi-ant. Then Saul said: Go, and God shall be with you! So Da-vid chose five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in his bag, and then took his staff and sling and went to meet his foe. When Go-li-ath saw Da-vid he cursed him and said: Am I a dog, that you come to one with a staff? Come on, and I will give your flesh to the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field. Then Da-vid said: You come to me with sword and spear and shield; but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts whom you have mocked: and I will smite you, that all may know there is a God in Is-ra-el.

It came to pass when Go-li-ath drew near that Da-vid took a stone from his bag, put it in his sling, and hurled it with such force that it sank deep in Go-li-ath's brow and felled him to the earth. Then Da-vid ran and as he had no sword of his own, he took Go-li-ath's sword and cut off his head with it. When the Phil-is-tines saw he was dead they fled in haste. Saul was glad of what Da-vid had done and kept him in his house and made him the head of his hosts. Jon-a-than, Saul's son, loved Da-vid as his own soul, and gave him his own robe and sword and bow and belt.

DA-VID IN SAUL'S TENT.

The war was now at an end, and when the troops were on their way home the folks came out of all the towns on the route to meet them and show their joy. They sang and danced and praised Saul and Da-vid, but as they praised Saul less than Da-vid his ire was roused and he feared they would soon want to make the young man their king. His love for Da-vid was changed to hate and the next day as he played the harp, he threw his spear at him twice, but Da-vid was not hurt.

When Saul saw he could not harm Da-vid he knew the Lord was with him, and that made him fear him and try to get rid of him. He sent him to war, in the hope that he would be killed, but Da-vid won more fights, and came back safe, and the folks praised him more and more.

The Phil-is-tines once more made war on Is-ra-el, and when Saul saw their great hosts his heart failed him and he sought help of the Lord. But God gave no word, no sign to show that his cry was heard, so in this sore strait, Saul went to a witch and bade her bring Sam-u-el from the dead, that he might tell him what to do. God let the witch do this, and when Saul saw the form of Sam-u-el he bowed down to the ground, while Sam-u-el said: Why hast thou brought me

up? Saul said: I am in great need of help, for the Phil-is-tines war on me, and the Lord has turned from me and pays no heed to my cry. In my grief I call on thee for aid. Then Sam-u-el told him that since the Lord had left him it was vain to seek the help of man, and that it was now time for God to do as he had said he would and take the crown from him. He told him, too, that the next day he and his sons would be slain and Is-ra-el would be in the hands of the Phil-is-tines.

These words came true; in the fight next day the king's three sons were slain, and Saul was so much hurt that he did not care to live, so he fell on his sword and took his own life. When Da-vid heard that Saul and Jon-a-than were dead he rent his clothes and mourned and wept for them and for the house of Is-ra-el.

CHAPTER XI.

DA-VID, SOL-O-MON, THE TEM-PLE.

WHEN Saul died there was a split in the ranks of the Is-ra-el-ites. Some wanted Saul's son made king, and some wished Da-vid to rule them. The Lord told Da-vid to go to

He-bron, and there the men of Ju-dah made him their king. When he had been in He-bron a few years Saul's son died and all the tribes came to He-bron to pour oil on Da-vid's head and make him king of all Is-ra-el.

Then Da-vid made his home at Je-ru-sa-lem and for years he was at war with the Phil-is-tines, from whom he took so much spoil that he soon grew rich. God blessed him, and his reign was long, but he did not have much peace, for his sons tried to wrest the crown from him.

First his son Ab-sa-lom sought to be king. He knew how to make friends, raised a band of men, and claimed the throne. This was a sad shock to Da-vid, for his son was dear to him. They fought and Da-vid's men won. The mule on which Ab-sa-lom rode in his flight through the wood went 'neath a large oak tree. His head was caught in the boughs of the tree and he hung there, while the mule rushed on. When Jo-ab, Da-vid's chief man, saw that Ab-sa-lom was caught fast in the tree he thrust three darts through his heart, so that he died and was thrown in a pit in the woods, and stones were piled on it. When Da-vid heard of this sad death he wept and cried out: O my son Ab-sa-lom! I wish I had died for thee, my son!

Though Ab-sa-lom was dead Da-vid was not left in peace, for when he was an old man his next son did as the first had done and claimed the throne as Da-vid was too old to rule. This did not please Da-vid; he wished his son Sol-o-mon to reign in his stead, so he told Za-dok, the priest, and Na-than, the seer, to pour oil on Sol-o-mon's head and make him king ere Da-vid died. This was done and they blew the horn and the folks cried: God save King Sol-o-mon!

Sol-o-mon was the son of Bath-she-ba, the one that Da-vid loved best of all his wives. She had been the wife of a man named U-ri-ah. Da-vid saw how fair she was and he fell in love with her. He placed U-ri-ah in the front in the next fight and he was killed. On U-ri-ah's death Da-vid brought Bath-she-ba to his house and made her his wife. But God was wroth with him for this sin, and He sent Na-than, the seer, to tell him that, since he had slain U-ri-ah with the sword of the Am-mon-ites, the sword should ne'er leave his house; that his sons should turn from him, and that the first child Bath-she-ba bore him should die. The babe died but God sent them one more son who lived to make the name of Sol-o-mon known to all the world.

When Da-vid was dead and Sol-o-mon sat on the throne God came to him in a dream and said: Ask what I shall give thee. Sol-o-mon asked for a wise head and a good heart that he might know how to rule Is-ra-el well. This pleased the Lord, and he said: Since thou didst not ask for wealth, nor fame, nor long life, but just for a wise heart, I will make thee wise and rich and great; thy fame shall spread to all lands and if thou wilt keep my laws I will give thee a long life.

All these things came to Sol-o-mon, and folks came from far and near to see him and hear his wise words. The Queen of She-ba came from her far off land and brought him rich gifts and asked him all the hard things she could think of to find out if he was as wise as men said he was. When she saw his slaves and his ships and fine house, and found he could tell her all she wished to know she went back home and said he was twice as wise and rich as she had heard.

Ere Da-vid died he told Sol-o-mon he must build a tem-ple for the Ark of God and he gave him a plan to make it by—so when Sol-o-mon had been king a few years he set to work to build this house. It took seven years to build it. The Ark was placed in it, and a cloud came down on

THE QUEEN OF SHE-BA AND SOL-O-MON.

the house and the Lord was in the cloud. Sol-o-mon knelt and prayed in the sight of all Is-ra-el; he begged the Lord to watch the house he had built for him, and to bless all the tribes and help them to keep his laws and serve him with pure hearts. Then a great feast was made and at the end of a week the folks went home with joy in their hearts.

Sol-o-mon reigned two-score years and did much that was good, but in his old age he turned from the true God and bowed down to the false ones of his wives. For this sin the Lord raised up foes to rob him of his peace, and told him that his son should not be king of all Is-ra-el, but should rule just one tribe, and some one else should be king of ten tribes. So when Sol-o-mon died the tribe of Ju-dah chose his son Re-ho-bo-am to be their king, and ten tribes chose Je-ro-bo-am to rule them.

These two kings were at war all the time till Re-ho-bo-am died and left his son A-bi-jam to rule and fight in his place. A-bi-jam's son A-sa was a good king, but most of the kings in those days were bad and did not love the Lord. King A-hab was the worst of all, and his wife Jez-e-bel was as bad as he was. They both served false gods and tried to make all men do the same

9.

KING SOL-O-MON.

thing. Those who served the true God were hunted and put to death.

CHAPTER XII.

E-LI-JAH AND E-LI-SHA—JOB.

A-HAB'S sins were so great that God sent E-li-jah, the seer, to tell him that for some years no dew nor rain should fall on the earth. Then E-li-jah went and hid by the side of a brook and each day birds brought him bread and flesh to eat. But at last the brook dried up, so E-li-jah had nought to drink, and then God bade him go to the house of a poor widow who would take care of him. She had no food but a bit of meal and a few drops of oil; but the Lord made this last as long as the drought was in the land, so the meal and oil grew no less, though she and her son and E-li-jah all three ate of it each day for a long time. E-li-jah was too poor to pay her, but he gave her what was worth more than gold, for when her son fell sick and died he brought him back to life, and she said: Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the words of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.

Near the end of the third year of drought,

E-LI-JAH.

when the dearth was sore in the land, the Lord bade E-li-jah go back to A-hab and tell him there would soon be rain. When A-hab saw the seer he said: Art thou he who brought this woe on Is-ra-el? But E-li-jah said: I did not bring the drought; it was sent on thee for thy sins, and then he told him to call all the men of the land to Mount Car-mel. When they were all there E-li-jah said to them: why do you turn from the God of Is-ra-el to serve your false god Ba-al? Let us test them both and see which is the true God. We will each place a young bull on a pile of wood and then you may call on the name of Ba-al and I will call on the name of the Lord—and the one that sends fire to burn the bull shall be the true God.

The priests of Ba-al said that was all right, and when they had slain a young bull they laid it on the wood and said: O, Ba-al hear us! But though they cried out all day no fire came and the bull was not burnt. Then E-li-jah, slew a young bull, which he laid on the pile and then said: Lord God, of A-bra-ham, of I-saac, and of Is-ra-el, let it be known this day that thou art God in Is-ra-el, and that I have done all these things at thy word. At once fire fell from the sky and burnt the bull, and all they that stood

by bowed to the earth and cried out: The Lord he is the God! The Lord he is the God! Then E-li-jah said: Take the priests of Ba-al! They took them and the seer slew them all. Then he told A-hab to go home at once for a big storm was on the way and if he did not haste the rain would catch him. A-hab went home with all speed and told his wife all that the seer had done and how he had slain the priests of Ba-al. Then Jez-e-bel sent word to E-li-jah that ere the day was done she would kill him as he had killed her priests; so he fled for his life, and when he had gone a long way he lay down in the shade of a tree and went to sleep. While he slept the Lord sent food and drink and bade him eat and go on his way. The rest and the food did him good and he went on in the strength of that meat for more than a month. Then he came to Mount Ho-reb and went in a cave there to stay a while; but the word of the Lord came and told him to go in search of a man named E-li-sha and when he found him to pour oil on his head and make him seer in his place. At last E-li-jah came to a field in which E-li-sha was at work, and when E-li-sha knew who he was he went with him to wait on him and learn to do the great works that E-li-jah did.

When E-li-jah knew that it was time for him to leave the earth he asked E-li-sha what he should do for him ere he went and E-li-sha begged him to make him wise and good like he was. E-li-jah said this was a hard wish to grant, but if E-li-sha kept a close watch on him and saw him when he left the earth his wish would come to pass. Soon, while they were still on their way, a bright light flashed by them and a thing that looked like a coach and team of fire swept by and caught E-li-jah up to the sky. E-li-sha saw him go and caught his cloak as it fell from the coach, and from that time he was a wise seer, and did great works in the name of the Lord.

In the land of Uz lived a man named Job, and in all that land no man was so good and rich as he. He had ten boys and girls, and large flocks and herds, and rich fields in which they might graze; and, best of all, he had a heart full of love to God and man. For a long time he lived at peace with all the world and no care came to cloud his life. But one day, to test him, the Lord sent him great grief and woe: fire fell from the sky and burnt up his sheep; a band of thieves drove off his herds and slew the men who took care of them, and a high wind blew

down the house in which his boys and girls were at a feast and killed them all. All this was hard to bear, but it did not make Job lose his faith: he rent his clothes and fell on the ground and said: The Lord gave and the Lord took back; blessed be the name of the Lord. But ere long God sent a test that was still more hard to bear. He smote Job with boils from his head to his feet, so that he was just one mass of sores and could get no rest day or night. Then his wife said to him: How can you keep your faith in God? Trust him no more, but curse him ere he kills you.

Job told her it was wrong to speak that way, and that one could not hope to have all of the good things of life and none of the ills. Three of his friends came to mourn with him, and for a whole week they sat by him and spake not, for his grief was too great for words. He could not get well nor could he die and his pain was so great that at last he cursed the day of his birth and said he wished he had not been born. Then his friends said he must have done some great sin and that was why God so smote him.

Job knew he had done no wrong and so the words of his friends roused his ire and he told them they were not wise or kind to say such

things to him and that if they were in his place he would not speak so to them. They talked back and forth this way some time till God put an end to their vain words. He made a strong wind blow round the place where they sat, and the voice of God spoke to Job from the wind and showed him that the Lord did all things well and that no one might dare to find fault with him. Job owned his sin with grief and shame. The Lord showed grace to Job and made him well and strong once more, and gave him ten more boys and girls. His flocks and herds, too, were twice as large as they had been, and he lived in peace and joy, and died in a good old age.

CHAPTER XIII.

JO-NAH—DAN-IEL.

ONCE the word of the Lord came to a seer named Jo-nah and bade him go to the great town of Nin-e-veh and warn the men of that place to turn from their sins. Jo-nah did not wish to do this, so he tried to flee from the face of the Lord. He went to Jop-pa and there went on board a ship that was bound to Tar-shish. But the Lord sent a great wind; the waves swept the

decks, and the ship was like to sink. A great fear came on all on board but Jo-nah, who had gone to sleep and did not know there was a storm till the mas-ter of the ship bade him wake up and pray, as they were all at the point of death. Then the men cast lots to see who was to blame, for they thought the sin of some one in the ship had brought the storm on them. The lot fell on Jo-nah, and when they asked him what he had done he told the truth and said if they would throw him in the sea the waves would go down. They were loath to drown him, and tried their best to get to land; but the storm grew worse and worse, and at last they said Jo-nah must die that the rest might live. So they cast him in-to the sea which at once grew calm.

Now God had put a large fish by the side of the ship, and when Jo-nah fell he went right down its throat and stayed in the fish three days and three nights. Then the Lord made the fish swim to land and cast him up on the shore; and once more he bade Jo-nah go to Nin-e-veh and preach what he told him. Jo-nah went at once and warned the men of Nin-e-veh that in a few weeks the Lord would make an end of them and their town. When they heard this they turned from their bad ways, gave up their false

gods, and paid their vows to the God of Is-ra-el.

The Lord saw the grief and shame they felt, so he gave heed to their cry and said he would spare them. But this did not please Jo-nah, who thought folks would laugh at him and say he was not a true seer since he had told things that did not come to pass. His wrath waxed hot and he went out of the town and sat down by the side of the road to see what would be the fate of Nin-e-veh. God made a large gourd vine spring up by his side and its broad, thick leaves made such a good shade that Jo-nah was glad to have them screen him from the hot sun. The next day the Lord made a worm gnaw the vine so that it died, and the sun beat down on Jo-nah's head and made him so faint that he said he did not wish to live, but would like to die. Then God asked him if he did well to be so much vexed for so small a thing, and when Jo-nah said yes, he had a right to be vexed the Lord showed him that since he wished God to spare a mere vine that had come up in a night and gone in a night, how much more should he wish him to spare the great town of Nin-e-veh where lived such crowds of folks who had done no wrong.

Neb-u-chad-nez-zar, king of Bab-y-lon, went to war with Je-ho-i-a-kim, king of Ju-dah, and

took some of the men of that land back home with him as slaves. Four of the young Is-ra-el-ites, named Dan-iel, Sha-drach, Me-shach, and A-bed-ne-go, were fair of face and strong of limb, and their hearts were good and pure. God made them so wise and gave them such skill that when the king talked with them he said they knew ten times as much as all the wise men in his realm, so he took them to live in his house and be near him all the time.

One night the king dreamed a strange dream that made him ill at ease, but when he woke it had passed from him, and asked his wise men to tell him his dream and what it meant. They said if he would tell them what he dreamt they would show him the sign, but if they did not know the dream they could not say what it meant. This put the king in a rage and he said that all should be slain. Then Dan-iel and his three friends prayed to God for help, and the Lord showed Dan-iel the dream and what it was the sign of. So he went to the king and said: No man could tell thee thy dream if the Lord did not teach him. I am no more wise than the rest of the wise men; I know no more than they do, but God knows all things and he has showed me thy dream and what it means. Then he told

the king what he dreamt and what would come to pass. And Neb-u-chad-nez-zar fell on his face and said: Now I know that thy God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, since he hath taught thee this. And he was so much pleased with Dan-iel that he made him the head man of the realm, and, to please him, made his three friends great men, too.

Years went by, and one day the king made a large god of gold, set it up on a plain, and bade all men bow down to it, and said those who did not do so should be burnt to death.

Dan-iel's three friends would not bow to this false god, so they were bound and thrown in a fire so hot that the flames burned the men who threw them in. But it did not hurt them, for the God they served came to their aid. When the king saw that they walked through the fire and were not burnt he said: Sha-drach, Me-shach and A-bed-ne-go, come forth and come to me. When they came all men could see that not a hair of their head was singed, and there was no smell of fire on their clothes. Then the king blessed their God; made them great men once more, and passed a law that no one should dare to speak ill of them.

For a while all went well, but in the course

of time the king grew proud and vain, and ceased to think or speak of God. At this time he had a dream which no one but Dan-iel could make clear to him. In his sleep he saw a great tall tree whose top reached to the sky. The boughs spread out and made a good perch for the fowls of the air, and a good shade for the beasts of the field. The leaves of the tree were fair and it bore much fruit. But a voice from the sky said: Hew down the tree, cut off the boughs, make the leaves fall, and shake off the fruit; but leave the stump in the ground and let it be wet with dew.

Dan-iel told the king that this dream was sent to warn him of what would be his fate. He said he would be made to leave his fine house and live in the fields like the beasts; that the dew would fall on him, and he would eat grass like an ox, till he learned that none but God could rule the world.

At the end of a year all this came to pass. God gave Neb-u-chad-nez-zar twelve months in which to turn from his sins, but, though he had been warned, he paid no heed. He tried to be more than a man, and God made him less than one—he wished to be as great as God, and the Lord made him like a beast. He lost his mind, and lived out-of-doors and ate grass like an ox.

His hair hung down like a mane, his nails were as long as bird's claws, and the dew fell on him as he lay on the ground at night. At the end of sev-en years his mind came back to him, he was made king once was more, and gave thanks and praises to the Lord who had taught him that the proud shall be brought low.

When his son Bel-shaz-zar came to the throne of Bab-y-lon he made a great feast for his lords, and sent for the cups of gold which his fath-er took from the house of the Lord at Je-ru-sa-lem when he made war on the king of Ju-dah. Bel-shaz-zar and his guests drank wine out of these cups, and praised the gods of gold, brass, wood and stone. As they feasted there came the hand of a man and wrote some words on the wall. The king saw the hand but could not tell what it wrote. When he found his wise men could not read the words he sent for Dan-iel, and said he would give him wealth and rank if he could tell him what they meant. Dan-iel read the words and told the king they meant that God would take his realm from him and give it to the Medes and Per-sians. This came to pass, for Bel-shaz-zar was slain that same night and Da-ri-us, the king of the Medes and Per-sians, took the place.

Da-ri-us loved ease. He chose six-score men of high rank to take charge of things in his place. Then he chose three head men to rule them, and made Dan-iel the chief of these three, which shows how much he liked him, and how good and wise he thought him. This made these men hate Dan-iel, and they tried to find some fault in him that they might tell it to the king. But as he did no wrong they could not harm him that way, so they hit on a new plan. They knew that Dan-iel prayed to God, so they coaxed Da-ri-us to sign a law that for a month no one should ask help of God or man, save of the king, and that if a man broke this law he should be thrown to the lions. Dan-iel heard of this new law and knew the king had signed it, but he did not cease to pray and give thanks to God three times a day, as was his wont.

When Dan-iel's foes told the king of this he was vexed that he had made such a law and all that day he tried to find a way to save Dan-iel. But he could not get out of this sad strait, so when the sun set he bade them throw him in the den of lions and place a stone on the mouth of then den. He said: O Dan-iel, thy God will save thee! but all that night he could not sleep

and as soon as it was day he went to the den and cried with a loud voice: O Dan-iel, can thy God save thee? Dan-iel told him God had shut the lions' mouths so they had not hurt him. Then Da-ri-us was glad. Dan-iel was brought out of the den and the men who had blamed him, with their wives and boys and girls were thrown to the lions, and were at once torn in pieces. And Da-ri-us made a law that all men should serve Dan-iel's God.

When A-has-u-e-rus ruled in Per-sia, he made a great feast and sent for his wife, queen Vash-ti, to come to the feast and let his guests see how fair she was, but Vash-ti would not go, and this made the king wroth and he asked his chief men what should be done to the queen to make her know that the king's word was law. They said it would be well for him to say that, since she would not come when he sent for her, he would send for her no more but would find some one else to take her place in his home and heart. Then they sent for young girls, that the king might choose a new wife. One of them, named Es-ther, was so fair that A-has-u-e-rus chose her, put the crown on her head, and made a feast for the new queen. Es-ther was a niece and ward of Mor-de-cai the Jew (who sat at the king's

gate) but no one knew this for Mor-de-cai told her not to let it be known that her folks were Jews.

At this time two of the king's men made a plot to kill him, but Mor-de-cai found it out and told Es-ther, and she told the king. The men were put to death, and what the Jew had done to save the king's life was set down in a book in which such things were kept. The head man of the court was named Ha-man, and the king said men should bow to him as they would to a king; but Mor-de-cai would not do it, and this slight put Ha-man in such a rage that he could not bear the sight of the Jew, and made up his mind to get rid of him and all the Jews in the land. He told the king he would give him a large sum if he would make a law that all Jews should be put to death. Now the king cared nought for the Jews, but he liked Ha-man and wished to please him, so he told him he might do as he chose. Then Ha-man made the scribes, who were men learned in the law, write that on a set day all the Jews in the land should be slain; he sealed this law with the king's seal to show that it might not be changed, and sent it in haste to the men who ruled in all parts of Per-sia. Then Ha-man went to drink wine with the king, but poor Mor-de-cai rent his clothes and wept, and sent word to Es-

DAN-IEL IN THE DEN OF THE LIONS.

ther that she must plead with the king and try to save her folks from death. Es-ther said she dared not do this since it was the law that all who went to the king when he had not sent for them should be put to death if the king, when he saw them, did not hold out his staff of gold as a sign of grace; she said the king had not sent for her for more than a month, and she feared to risk her life. But Mor-de-cai said she might as well die that way as to be slain with all the Jews on the day set by Ha-man, for—since she was one of them—the mere fact that she dwelt in the king's house would not save her from their fate. He said, too, it might be, the Lord had made her queen that she might plead for her race. Then Es-ther sent word that he and all the Jews must fast and pray three days and nights, and said she and her maids would do the same thing, and at the end of that time she would go to the king and if she lost her life for it she would feel that she died in a good cause. On the third day she put on her rich robes and went and stood near the throne on which the king sat. God put it in his heart to be good to her, so he held out his gold staff, and when she drew near and touched it he said: What wilt thou have, Queen Es-ther, for I will give it to thee, though it be the half of

my realm. And Es-ther said: If it seem good to the king, let the king and Ha-man come this day to the feast I have made for him. So the king and Ha-man went to Es-ther's feast, and when they sat at meat the king asked the queen once more what he should do for her. She said if he and Ha-man would dine with her next day she would then tell him her wish. And Ha-man went off full of joy and pride to think that he had twice been asked to dine with the king and queen.

That night the king could not sleep, so he bade one of his men read to him from the book in which the scribes wrote down all the things that had to do with the king and his realm. When the man read the part of the book that told how Mor-de-cai once saved the king's life, the king asked how much had been paid for this good deed, and the man said he had not been paid at all. Just then Ha-man came in and the king said to him: What shall be done for the man whom the king wished to please? Now Ha-man thought he was this man, so he said: Let the king's robes and crown be put on him, and let him mount the king's horse; then let a man of high rank lead the horse through the streets, and cry out, so that all may hear:

Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to please. Then the king said: Make haste and do as thou hast said to Mor-de-cai, the Jew. So Ha-man put the king's robes and crown on Mor-de-cai, set him on the king's horse, and led him through the town, while he cried out: Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king likes to please! When he had done this he had to go with the king to the queen's feast, though his heart was full of rage and hate.

For the third time the king asked Es-ther what he could do to please her, and then she begged him to spare the Jews, and told him all that Ha-man had done, and the plot he had laid to get rid of them. The king was filled with rage at these words, and bade his slaves hang Ha-man at once and give his fine house to Es-ther; and when he learned that Mor-de-cai was kin to the queen he gave him a gold crown and a robe of blue and white, and made him a great man in the land.

But Es-ther was still sad, so once more she went to the king, though he had not sent for her, and fell at his feet and wept. He held out his gold staff and then she rose and begged him to change the law he had let Ha-man make. He

told her the law could not be changed, but said she and Mor-de-cai might make a new law and sign it with the king's seal. So Es-ther and Mor-de-cai made a law that the Jews should kill all those who came to do them harm. This filled the Jews with joy, and when the time came that Ha-man had set for them to be slain they went to meet their foes, fought them two days, and put them to rout with great loss of life.

Then they made a great feast called Pu-rim, and to this day the Jews keep this feast each year.

While Cy-rus, who came next to Da-ri-us, was king, he said the Jews might go back to their own land and take with them the cups of gold and fine things that had been taken from their House of God in Je-ru-sa-lem. Some of them went, and tried to build up the walls of Je-ru-sa-lem and live there once more, but things did not go well with them and for long years they were slaves to strange kings, some of whom came from Syr-ia and some from E-gypt. At last the Ro-mans came and took Je-ru-sa-lem and broke down the walls, and sent a man named He-rod to rule the Jews and be their king. He was fierce and rough, and was much hated by the Jews. But he wished them to like him, so that he might be left to rule in peace; so he tried to make them think that he

HE-ROD BUILDS A NEW HOUSE OF GOD.

had faith in God and served Him in the same way they did, and to please them he tore down the old house of God and built a grand new one in its place.

He-rod played a great role in the life of Christ, and the house of God he built was the scene of some of the chief scenes in that grand life.

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